

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

"HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS, ARE THE FEET OF HIM THAT BRINGETH GOOD TIDINGS, THAT PUBLISHETH PEACE."—Isa. lii, 7.

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FROM THE TOKEN, FOR 1832.

THE THEOLOGY OF NATURE.

BY ORVILLE DEWEY.

The turf shall be my fragrant shrine;
My temple's dome, that arch of thine;
My censor's breath, the mountain airs;
And silent thoughts, my only prayers.

It is a bountiful creation. It is rich and full and overflowing, with the beneficence of its Maker. Less than all its plenitude and beauty might have sufficed for our wants; but less would not suffice to set forth his inexpressible goodness. When he had founded the earth, and established the mountains, and set up the great frame of nature, and implanted the germ of every useful production, it might have been enough for the necessities of man, but it was not enough for the generous kindness of his Maker; and he came forth again: he came forth with an added work, and scattered, from an unsparing hand, the bounties and delights of every clime and season. Variety and exuberance poured their stores into the lap of nature, and it was full. The earth opened its fertile bosom, and sent forth its flowers and fruits to gratify the taste; the world rung with the voice of melody to regale the ear; and hues of light were spread over the verdant earth, and the glowing clouds of eventide, and the glorious expanse of heaven, to delight the eye of man. And upon this theatre, overspread with more than the magnificence of eastern palaces, and beneath the shining canopy of heaven, there went forth life, buoyant and strung and gifted, to enjoy it to the full; life with its untiring and matchless energies; life with its light sportings of pleasure, and its secret workings of delight; life, not bare and barren, an abstract existence, but clothed with senses, endowed with sensibility, connected by magic ties of association with the objects around it; touched with rapture at the visions that pass before it, and kindling with irrepressible aspirations after brighter visions yet to be revealed; life, full as nature is, of heavenly gifts; full of glorious capacities, of dear affections, and unbounded hopes, and thus tending, with manifest direction, to a higher and a more enduring state of being.

But let us descend to a humbler theatre of existence, yet equally filled with proofs of the divine goodness. When we go abroad from our dwelling, in one of the bright days of summer, what a scene is presented before us! This, too, is filled with life, infinitely diversified, changing, active, intense life and pleasure. It is, I repeat, a crowded scene. It seems as if it were designed, that every thing which *could* live, should have its happy hours of being. The spot that will not admit one kind of existence, is supplied with another. In every possible variety of situation, from the spire of grass to the lofty tree, from the plain to the mountain-top, on the hill-side and in the deep forest, in the flashing waters and the buoyant air, there are abodes, numberless, various, vast, minute, for every living thing. The very rocks are penetrated by eager claimants for their appointed spaces; the steep and barren precipices give sure footing to the wild goat; the dark caverns echo to the footsteps of living creatures.

Descend we to a still minuter survey, aided by the microscope, and what do we find! Every elod of earth, every drop of water, every morsel

of delicious fruit, is animated life. It were scarcely a stretch of imagination to conceive it may yet be proved, that the very sunbeams have life. Let not this discovery of modern philosophy, so full of the wonders of divine beneficence, disgust us. Well, indeed, that 'man has not a microscopic eye;' and for a plainer reason than that no reason, that 'man is not a fly.' Well is it, and an added proof of goodness, that the impressions of sense are an overmatch for the teachings of philosophy. But let it not offend us, that the air we breathe, and the dust we tread upon, teem with active and glad existence.

It is a bountiful creation; and bounty demands acknowledgment; but its very silence, as to all demands upon our gratitude, seems to me more affecting, than any articulate voice of exhortation. If 'cloven tongues of fire, sat upon every bush and forest bough;' if audible voices were borne upon every breeze, saying, 'Give thanks! give thanks!' however startling at first, it would not be so powerful, so eloquent, as the deep and unobtrusive silence of nature. The revolving seasons encircle us with their blessings; the fruits of the earth successively and silently spring from its bosom, and silently moulder back again to prepare for new supplies; day and night return; the 'soft stealing hours' roll on; mighty changes and revolutions are passing in the abysses of the earth and the throned heights of the firmament; mighty worlds and systems are borne with speed almost like that of light, through the infinitude of space: but all is order, harmony and silence. What histories could they relate of infinite goodness—but they proclaim it not! What calls to grateful devotion are there in earth and heaven—but they speak not! No messenger stands upon the watch-towers of the creation, on hill or mountain, saying, like the Moslem priests from the minarets of their temples, 'To prayer! to prayer!' I am sometimes tempted to wish there were, or to wonder there were not. But so it is; there is no audible voice nor speech.

And for this cause, and for other causes, how many of Heaven's blessings escape our notice. In how many ways is the hand of Heaven stretched out to us, and yet is unseen; in how many places does it secretly deposit its benefactions! It is as if a friend had come with soft and gentle steps to the dwelling of our want, or to the abode of our sickness, had laid down his gift, and silently turned away. And during half our lives, the night draws her veil of darkness over the mysterious paths of Heaven's care; and yet those paths are filled with ministering angels that wait about our defenceless pillow, and keep their watch by the couch of our repose. Yes, in night and darkness, and untrodden solitudes, what histories of God's mercy are recorded! But they are not written in human language; they are not proclaimed by mortal tongue. The dews of heavenly beneficence, silently descend—its ocean rolls in dark caverns—the recesses of the wilderness are thronged with insects and beasts and birds, that utter no sound in the ear of man.

Full of bounty as this work of God is—silent and touching as are it appeals to gratitude, it is yet more—it is a joyous creation—and thus bears another indication of the character of its Author.

Our ideas of religion are apt to be too constrained, and, not to say too solemn, yet too exclusively of that character. Frail and sinful as

we are, it is not strange that this should be the tendency of our minds, and especially so, if our minds are not familiar with this great theme. But the theology of nature teaches us a different lesson—teaches us, as the Holy Word also teaches us, to worship God, 'with joyfulness and gladness of heart.' The lesson is written with sunbeams upon the ever fair and youthful brow of nature. A dull and slavish piety is at war with the creation. The bright skies, the free and flowing streams, the chainless winds, the waving forest, teach us not so—and every being of nature's ten thousand rejoicing tribes, calls us to a glad communion with it. If, indeed, the world with its tenants were smitten with universal sadness; or even if the earth were filled with dull, heavy, formal creatures, I might be obliged to think differently. But what is the fact? Is it a solemn creation that I see around me? Is it not rather, I repeat, a joyous creation? Does it not ring from side to side with notes of joy? It is not the moaning owl from her blighted tree that I commonly hear—but the glad song of the birds of day. I look abroad through the glades and forests, too, and I see not demure creatures, stalking forth in staid and dull formality—but the prancing steed in the valley, the bounding goat upon the hills, the sportive flocks in the pasture. All about me is activity—yes, and the activity of pleasure. Swift wings fan the air around me: quick steps hurry by me in their gambols—and the whole wide firmament sends forth from its viewless strings, the music of a rejoicing creation. Heaven and earth are filled, I had almost said, with a visible joy. It seems as if the Spirit that is abroad in the universe were scarcely veiled from our eyes; as if we almost saw it through its robe of light—saw an expression, more intense than any countenance can give, in the serene heavens—as if we felt a presence, nearer than that of any friend, in the beauty and fragrance and breath of summer. And the heavens—is it an illusion to think so?—the heavens grow brighter, and the earth more beautiful, as we gaze upon them with the eye of devotion: joy and thanksgiving.

But let us take a minuter survey, and we shall find that the creation is not only filled with blessings and joys, but filled, too, with indications of the most tender and considerate care. The topics that illustrate this may be familiar, but they can never grow old or dull.

When we look abroad upon the universe, we observe, as has been said, that every portion of it, however large, or however minute, is the dwelling-place of animated life. Creatures of every rank, from the soaring eagle to the feeble insect, from the mighty elephant to the creeping reptile—creatures of every size and form and mode of existence, crowd all the regions, the spaces, the habitations of earth, of ocean, and the air. Now, there is for each one of these a path in which to go, an element to live in, a food somewhere deposited to sustain it—but how does each one, without delay, without uncertainty, without mistake, find its proper sphere and provision? Man, with all his knowledge, could never discover it. Yet there is not a way so dark, there is not a mode of action or habit so strange or curious, there is not a provision so hidden, but the mole, the insect, the creature that lives but for an hour, goes straight to its designed end, as if the clearest reason inspired it—as if

the experience of ages guided it—as if the light of heaven shone upon its unknown way. And heaven's light does shine upon its way—and a hand of more than parental care leadeth it. A mighty intelligence, diffused every where, through every clod of earth, through every track of the inhabited waters, through every region of the populous air—a mighty intelligence there is, like a sunbeam, guiding the children of instinct, in the darkness and in the light, in the obscure and the clear, in the height and in the depth, and abroad in every unknown and, by man, untrodden path of the living universe. A mighty intelligence there is, but gracious and kind, present with every being, providing for every occasion, helping the feeble, and directing the strong, opening the storehouse of nature, and pointing each one to his abode, his safeguard, and his supply.

But, not only in every sphere and element of nature, does every tribe of the animal creation need an appropriate sustenance, and a peculiar set of habits, but each one needs a different covering, suited to the mode and place of its existence. With man, to provide this clothing is the work of contrivance and art—manufactories are established at immense cost, and every year adds to the list of new inventions and new fabrics—a fair portion of all the industry in the world is employed in these labors. But while man, because he is endowed with skill to manufacture his own apparel, and in order that he may live in all climates, and possess the world for his inheritance, is left to provide for himself, as his exigencies require, observe how admirably nature has taken care for all its irrational children. 'They toil not; they spin not;' and yet man, in all the pride of regal pomp, in all the splendor of opulence, in all the multiplicity of his inventions, is not arrayed like one of these; and is obliged, for his goodliest adorning and attire, for his down and his furs, for his ermine and his waving plumes, to resort to the humble creature that prowls in the wilderness, or makes his habitation among the rude and unsightly rocks, or steals forth from the ices of the Pole. Wherever these tenants of nature wander on the mountains that are covered with eternal snow, or beneath the blazing firmament of the Zone—whether they cut the liquid stream, or try the courses of heaven—whether they walk forth in their might and shake the earth with their footsteps, or creep among the silent reeds and by the still water-course—whether they paw with the war-horse in the valley, or weave their gossamer web that is shaken in the breeze—behold, each one hath his appropriate vesture, such as all human art could not form, and cannot imitate. Let this art be tasked to the utmost, and it cannot weave the fine fabric that clothes the back of the spider, and which, we may add, under the magnifying glass is more beautiful than all that the richest dyes can stamp upon our most exquisitely-wrought fabrics—let this art be tasked to the utmost, and it cannot make a feather—it cannot, in its choicest soil and climate, cause any thing to grow like the furs that are nourished amidst the frozen latitudes of the North—it cannot form such a coat of mail, as guards the leviathan of the deep.

And why, let it be asked, is all this, and from whence does it proceed? Why does that which in animals of the warm latitudes is a thin covering of hair, in the cold regions of the earth thicken to a warm clothing of fur—and why does this, in the severest seasons, become longer and warmer to meet the exigency!—a rule so invariable that the dealers in fur depend upon it with perfect confidence. Could the sending of an additional garment by a kind parent to a child, destitute and exposed, more strikingly indicate a considerate and tender care? And why, also, do the scales of the fish, so perfectly adapt-

ed to his element, become in the bird, the most delicate and buoyant plumage?—a clothing soft and beautiful, that nothing more appropriate could be given to creatures that dwell in the air, and sing among the branches. It is unlike the fur of animals, which it most resembles, in being cooler, as well as that it is fitted for flight—and yet when the sun has withdrawn his power, and the chilling shades come on, it is capable of being gathered and wrapped more closely for a mantle in the night season. Here is united in one dress, lightness as well as beauty, strength and buoyancy, adaptation for every climate and element apparel for the day, and clothing for the night.

Well did the sacred Teacher, so remarkable for his frequent allusions to nature, say, 'Consider the ravens; behold the fowls of the air; look abroad upon the wonders of the creation; consider these things, O man! and be wise, be faithful and confiding.'

Confide in God. Trust in a being, whose inspection and care nothing can escape; whose goodness creates wants but to supply them; whose bounty has no law but that of infinite diffusion. Believe, that He who heareth the young ravens when they cry, will hear the voice of thy prayer. Believe, that He who hath a providence over the limbs, and senses, even the weakest and lowest of them, hath a providence over the mind. Believe, that He who guideth the way of instinct; who guideth the flight of the bird in his migration from clime to clime, will guide the soul in its untried and unknown way. 'There is a power,' says a poet of our own, in an admired passage;—

'There is a power, whose care
Teaches the way along that pathless coast—
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.'

And how reasonable, as well as beautiful, is the inference!

'He, who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will guide my steps aright.'

FROM THE GOSPEL ANCHOR.

"For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."—PAUL.

It fell to the lot of the great apostle of the Gentiles, who wrote this language, to experience almost all that variety of fortune "which human life is heir to." He had passed the various tides of approbation and disesteem common among men; had enjoyed the smiles of friends and also their frowns; had known the pleasing dreams of prosperity, and tasted the bitter waters of adversity. He had been beloved, respected, hated and persecuted by the same individuals. His whole life, indeed, affords a checkered scene of good and ill. Days of joy and days of sorrow, had each in their turn, been his. Yet amidst all these diversities of life, it seemed his constant endeavor to maintain a perfect evenness of disposition. In his days of prosperity, when fortune smiled upon him—

"And visions of happiness danc'd on his mind," he suffered not himself to be exalted above measure; neither was he comfortless and without hope, when the clouds of adversity lowered around him. He was "troubled on every side, but not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." A meek submission to the will of Providence, seemed to characterize his conduct; and an unruffled calmness possessed his soul, on all occasions. No change of state induced complaining, and no inauspicious circumstance aroused a murmur in his breast. For he had learned in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content.

The character of Paul, in this respect, affords an example worthy of imitation. And it may be useful to study it with attention, and learn therefrom a lesson of contentment.

Nothing is more desirable, because nothing more effectually administers to the happiness of man, than to be contented. When our desires are confined to what we actually enjoy, we have a greater relish for the blessings we receive. If we are blessed abundantly with every desirable good, far greater is our enjoyment. But if our circumstances are not the best, our condition not the most desirable, to be contented with it leaves the mind at ease, and often frees us from a cumbersome load of borrowed trouble. And however much circumstances may vary, fortune smile or frown, our peace of mind is not destroyed.

It has been said, "contentment is the greatest blessing." And that this is true, our own experience may have testified; if not, our observation must. For of all earthly blessings, none ranks higher than to be content. In prosperity it is peace, and in adversity, support. In health it is quietude; in sickness it is comfort; and in every affliction it affords consolation. All classes of people may reap enjoyment from it. The high low, rich and poor, may each alike receive their degree of pleasure. To the beggar it imparts his sum of joy, and to the mighty monarch it can do no more.

But what can give this invaluable blessing? It is all-important that we know. What gave the apostle Paul this happy state of mind? He had learned to be content—but where? The vicissitudes of life through which he passed, no doubt instructed him, in some degree, but more than this, his *holy faith*. He believed God, and was "not ashamed of the gospel."—He received instruction from the meek and lowly Jesus, concerning the purposes of God, and the final destination of all mankind. He was taught the ever enduring kindness of the Father, from the same kindness manifested in the Son. And he early learned that the Judge of all the earth will do right. He heard the *record*; he believed it, and was satisfied. From these he learned contentment.

Whatsoever will wean our affections from the transitory things of nature; fix them upon the First Cause of all causes; give us a knowledge of his goodness, wisdom and power; increase our confidence therein, and teach us that whatsoever he does is best for us, and best for all—will bring to every mind contentment. And what can more effectually do this, than to embrace the holy religion of Paul, and with him "to trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe?" What can more firmly fix our affections upon the blessed "God, who is rich in mercy," than to be assured of "the great love wherewith he loved us?" With such assurance, who could fail to love the Lord with all his heart? And with the fact before us, that "he chasteneth us for our profit," our confidence is strengthened, even while suffering under the afflictive dispensation of his providence. We can taste his goodness, and be "persuaded" that nothing above, below, or round about us, "can separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord." And with such unwavering confidence nothing can make us discontented—nothing can disturb the calmness of our minds, or induce complaining at the ways of God.

But suppose we doubt the universal love of God; suppose that we believe that some afflictions must endure forever; that many of our race must be consigned to never-ending torture? Can we then remain contented? Can we feel a satisfaction that such unutterable anguish should be permitted? Does not the tender heart revolt? Our friends, mayhap, are numbered with the damned—our wives, our lovely children, and

perhaps, ourselves. Who knows? And is there no uneasiness lest this should be the case? Nay, more. However upright our conduct may have been, are there not the most distressing fears, lest, after all, we miss the mark?—There are; it must be so; it cannot be avoided. None but the foolish and presumptuous can dissipate their fears. And hence our confidence is shaken; our faith begins to waver; and the more it wavers the worse is our condition. We stagger at the promises of God, through unbelief. Thick clouds of doubt envelope us in misty darkness, and discontent, with all its bitterness, ensues. Who can guard against it? Who can trust contingencies involving such dreadful consequences, and yet be satisfied? The idea of burning in an endless hell, is intolerable. The bare possibility of such an event, creates distrust in God's unbounded goodness, and makes him more a tyrant than a God of love.

Witness for a while, the conduct of those who thus believe. See their restlessness, and hear their "poor complaining." Dissatisfied with what is passed, and boding ill to come, no peace is theirs. Doubt and apprehension arise in their minds. Fear brings them into bondage, and begets new fear, lest haply they should fail to gain "a passport to the skies," and be sent away with reprobates. Nothing satisfies. Goodness, mercy, and grace, are all mere empty names,

"And Love is still an emptier sound."

With the natural heart that God has given them, they cannot be content. They toil to get another—unnatural. And thus discontented with their natural birth, they travail in great distress, to be born again. Or, what is much the same thing, they groan and agonize to get at something—nothing—misnamed Religion. Mistaking the reality, they fix upon a shadow. And after all, if this is thought to be obtained, it does not satisfy, nor bring them peace of mind. They still are fearful—fearful lest they should stumble, fall, and finally sink to ruin. Or else they are afraid, they have not obtained the very thing they sought for—a lack of which would be their endless loss. Thus discontentment reigns in their minds continually; and distrustful of themselves, they soon distrust their Maker. His promises appear too large: they cannot believe—they doubt and are damned—damned in the condemnation of their unbelief. And why? Simply, because they have rejected the doctrines of Paul. They do not believe that "God will have all men to be saved." Or if they do, they doubt the efficiency of the means to effect the purpose. This shakes their confidence in the Majesty of heaven, and causes discontentment in their minds.

What can be done to remedy the evil, and make us contented in our present state? Place unyielding confidence in the wisdom, power and goodness, of an overruling Providence. Yet this cannot be done, if we believe in never-ending torture. For if we suppose that God designed the endless woe of some, we cannot vindicate his goodness. And if we believe he designed the happiness of all, yet the means employed to accomplish it, will never be effectual, we are led, unavoidably, to distrust his power and wisdom. And while we thus distrust the wisdom, power and goodness of our Father, we cannot be contented. Hence it is indispensable that, with Paul, we believe in God, and be convinced that "in the dispensation and fullness of times," he will "gather together in one, all things in Christ." Then we can rest assured that "all things work together for good," and in whatsoever circumstances we are placed, we can be content. Then peace of mind will follow, and happiness be ours.

Amsterdam, N. Y.

R. O. W.

FROM THE STAMFORD SENTINEL.

FANATICISM.

The following communication we have received from a respectable Merchant of an adjoining

town, with a request that it should appear in the "Sentinel," and at the same time directing our bill to be forwarded for payment. We thank the gentleman for his generosity—but we receive no compensation for the insertion of any article claiming a place in a public print with so much justice as we deem this entitled to. Every honest editor is in duty bound to aid individuals in presenting their grievances to the public, especially when those grievances originate from pulpit declamations.

It has become a thing of notoriety among our hypocritical or fanatical clergy—(charity compels us to head our article with the latter phrase, hoping we have no minister of the Gospel among us so far lost to all respect for the Christian character as to ascend the sacred desk with a hypocritical heart)—we say, therefore, it has become altogether too common, for the good of society—for the good of "pure and undefiled religion"—for fanatics to ascend the pulpit, and attack the business and even characters of individuals, in solemn assembly, when decency would forbid a reply; and whenever individuals are thus attacked, they are justly entitled to a hearing through the press. We know we shall offend some by the course we pursue—but we are blessed with "a conscience void of offence towards man,"—a treasure of which the frowns of our foes cannot deprive us; and could we be persuaded the conduct of the clergyman towards the merchant sprang from motives of love, we should have rejected the article. We have not only observed, but have experienced much of the same kind of persecution as that alluded to below, and are well persuaded that it originates either in malice or fanaticism; at all hazards, we are bold to affirm, it springs not from that religion which requires we should "speak evil of no man." Far be it from us to undervalue religion—the religion of the Bible; but we are opposed to mechanical religion, and to all mechanical operations, producing fabrics of a fanatical character. We are not disposed, as many have charged us, to ridicule the means used by Christian churches to convert sinners; we are not disposed to make light of Four Days' Meetings; but we are disposed to speak our sentiments freely respecting the conduct of many advocates of those meetings, who travel out of the holy path prescribed by the Gospel, to attack the opinions of honest men, in the spirit of malevolence, because all cannot be led to see and think as they do.—ED. SENT.

To the Public.

A Meeting was held in this place, agreeably to previous notice, (with the usual attendant circumstances of terror and denunciation to sinners,) commencing on the — inst. On Friday afternoon, among other requests read from the sacred desk by the officiating clergyman, was one of a very novel character—namely, "The prayers of God's people are requested for an unbelieving and impenitent Merchant of this place." Then followed the petition by the Rev. Gentleman—telling the Lord that this impious Merchant was exerting an unholy influence in society, and that a general impression existed that the individual in question was an unholy and abandoned man, and that nothing but infidelity and unbelief reigned in his heart. This course of proceeding was again resorted to in the evening meeting, with sevenfold violence, and in a manner well calculated to elicit all the unhallowed feelings of our nature, and to excite our disgust and contempt at a course so unchristian in character, so proscriptive in its nature, and so unlike the principles of the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus—in whose doctrine we take this public method to express our belief.

"Let the earth rejoice—the Lord reigneth—and we have the most abundant reason to be glad thereof."

Who made this Rev. Gentleman a judge between God and us? "To our own master we

stand or fall;" and in his righteousness do we trust for salvation, and not to the self-righteous prayers of fanatics, who, it would seem, denounce all as unbelievers who subscribe not to their dictation, but exercise the right of reading, and establishing an opinion of their own. And, because we read and understand the requirements of the Scripture to be at variance with the mechanical operations of the present day, in matters of religion, are we to be branded as 'unbelievers'—as 'unholy and abandoned' men? and to be denounced from the pulpit as men 'in whose hearts infidelity reigns,' and not be permitted to enter our protest against such proceedings? We hope not—we trust not! Through the columns of a candid, honest press, we know we may be heard.

As no name was mentioned in the above petition, the enquiry at once arose, 'Who is the individual thus held up to public scorn and derision?' The enquiry has been made of several members of the church, but no satisfactory answer was given—thus leaving the public at liberty to place the stigma on one or all of the merchants in the place, as may best suit caprice or fancy. We have, therefore, Mr. Editor, thought it proper to make a common cause of what we deem a gross insult from the sacred desk, against a course so slanderous in its nature, and so much calculated to bring a reproach on 'the faith once delivered to the saints,' and we do hereby solemnly protest against a course so illiberal, unchristian, and degrading—and take this method to state, that although we are not in the pale of the visible church, we profess the religion of the Bible, and especially that inculcated by St. James, 'Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this, to visit the widow and the fatherless, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.'

MERCHANTS of Stanwich.

FRUITS OF REVIVALS.

We have an account of the first promulgation of the gospel during the personal ministry of Jesus Christ. We have a history of the labors of his inspired apostles for thirty years after his resurrection—we cannot doubt that they taught all the doctrines, and enjoined all the duties, of the Christian religion—and there is not a single instance recorded, during all this time, of murder, suicide, or insanity, occasioned by their preaching.

Within the last three months, under the influence of the teachings of the professed followers of Christ, there have been at least two MURDERS, several SUICIDES, and some dozen cases of INSANITY, in these United States. We ask how this happens? Has the religion of Jesus changed, or is there "another gospel?" "Ye shall know them by their fruits." Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. Our divine master has taught us, that he "came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." It was his business to cure, not occasion lunacy; to restore the insane to their "right mind;" not to drive the sane to madness. In his life time the gospel was "good news," now it would be impossible to invent news more melancholy. Who, under such circumstances, can doubt that there are many "who trouble the people of God, and who have effectually "perverted the gospel of Christ?" S.

"FULLNESS OF THE GENTILES."

Professor Stuart, in a late sermon from Rom. xi, 25, in the Park-street Church, Boston, at the ordination of Rev. Wm. G. Schauffer, Missionary to the Jews, represented "fullness of the gentiles" as meaning "a great multitude, an infinitely great number of the Gentiles," and as denoting "a very general, if not a universal spread of the gospel." Very good, Professor, but do not forget your Andover creed and oath, lest they put you out of the synagogue. "But the tongue no man can tame; it is an unruly evil," Professor, and will yet be your ruin. S.

THE SLANDERER.

Think'st thou there are no serpents in the world
But those who slide along the grassy sod,
And sting the luckless foot that passes them?
There are those who in the path of social life
Do bask their spotted skins in fortune's sun,
And sting the soul—aye, till its healthful frame
Is changed to secret, festering, sore disease,
So deadly is the wound.

"THE TONGUE NO MAN CAN TAME."

It is a notorious fact, that the custom of slandering individual character and conduct, is becoming too frequent in all classes of society. Often in the gay circles of fashionable life, when wit has ceased to amuse and fancy to delight, the tedium of an hour is worn away in remarks upon the characters of different individuals. Before this arbitrary tribunal, the "still small voice" of reason is not heard. Justice, prudence and propriety, all withdraw from such a scene; while freedom, boldness, and severity of remark, combine to blind the judgment, and dissipate even those few bright spots which, like pearls in the ocean, shine through the rubbish that surrounds them. Old age and venerable locks form no effectual shield against the shafts of slander. The warm blood of youth, and the bold spirit of manhood is checked, and sometimes falls prostrate before its prevailing influence. Yes, too, has the rose faded from the cheek of the innocent female by the poisonous breath of the slanderer, as the tender flower, nipt, by a chilling frost, folds its leaves, and dies as soon as it receives the beams of the morning sun.

If there is any thing which one holds dear on earth, it is character. Take this away and all is gone. A thousand ills, which no human foresight can prevent, may deprive a man of his wealth—the tempest and the whirlwind may pass over his lands, and leave but here and there a scattered fragment, which, like relics of ancient arches and temples, seems only to recall to the mind of the passing stranger, their former beauty;—the lightning of heaven may strike his dwelling and burn it to ashes, while in seeming security, his family are reposing under its roof—the storm may drive his little vessel which contains his "little all," amidst the shoals and rocks of another coast, or the quicksands, like the fabled Scylla of antiquity, sink it in the unfathomable deep. All these misfortunes may overtake him, and yet, one tower be left, to which he can fly for refuge. These ills do not sweep away his character. And if this remains unshaken, one support is left, on which his hopes can rest; one height remains unscathed, from which he can look calmly down upon the "war of elements" beneath, which are conspiring to rob him of his temporal possessions.

How often is the peace of families and neighborhoods destroyed by the poisonous breath of the slanderer? How often is the sacred bond of matrimony dissolved, and the fair prospects of a rising family blasted forever? Yes, that family circle, which was a "heaven on earth," where domestic felicity was exhibited in full perfection, has been turned into the abode of wretchedness and woe, by a single word from the lips of the calumniator, uttered, perhaps, in an unwary moment, without consideration; or it may be, with that *fiend-like spirit*, which delights in the torture of others. Is this fiction—a mere flight of the imagination? I would that this were the fact. Then surely there would be cause for joy. But daily experience proves it otherwise. The calumniations and inventions daily poured forth upon individuals, sweeping away character, reputation, property, and every thing held dear on earth, proves it otherwise.—*L. I. Farmer.*

INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY UPON ANIMAL LIFE.

Dr. Rush, in his third Lecture on the "Cause of Animal Life," has the following remarks:—

Those who would be philosophers without Christianity and without a God, would do well to consider them with attention.—*Mag. and Advo.*

"The different religions of the world, by the activity they excite in the mind, have a sensible influence upon human life. Atheism is the worst of sedatives to the understanding and passions. It is the abstraction of thought from the most sublime, and of love from the most perfect, of all possible objects. Man is as naturally a religious, as he is a social and domestic animal; and the same violence is done to his mental faculties by robbing him of a belief in a God, that is done by dooming him to live in a cell, deprived of the objects and pleasures of social and domestic life. The necessary and immutable connexion between the texture of the human mind, and the worship of an object of some kind, has lately been demonstrated by the Atheists of Europe, who, after rejecting the true God, instituted the worship of nature, of fortune, and of human reason; and in some instances, with ceremonies of the most expensive and splendid kind. Religions are friendly to animal life, in proportion as they elevate the understanding, and act upon the passions of hope and love. It will readily occur to you, that Christianity, when believed and obeyed according to its original consistency with itself, and with the divine attributes, is more calculated to produce those effects than any other religion in the world. Such is the salutary operation of its doctrines and precepts upon health and life, that if its divine authority rested upon no other argument, this alone would be sufficient to recommend it to our belief. How long mankind may continue to prefer substituted pursuits and pleasures to this invigorating stimulus, is uncertain; but the time we are assured, will come, when the understanding shall be elevated from its present inferior objects, and the luxated passions be reduced to their original order. This change in the mind of man, I believe, will be effected only by the influence of the Christian religion, after all the efforts of human reason to produce it by means of civilization, philosophy, liberty and government, have been exhausted to no purpose." Vol. i, p. 43, *Rush's Works.*

We extract the following paragraph, which, for the honor of our race, we could wish had less truth in it, from a sermon delivered at Westford, Mass., at the funeral of Miss Abigail Reed, who, driven to despair by the blasphemous preaching so popular at the present day, committed suicide on the 10th of September last. The discourse is by Br. Russel Streeter, of Shirley, Mass.

"But I entreat you earnestly to consider the following fact, viz. that in all cases in which finite creatures misjudge the Divine administration, they misjudge it for the worse. They cannot make any mistakes by which the government of God would be made better than what it really is; for it is infinitely good; and no additions can possibly be made to infinite goodness. Hence, you will discover that all the erroneous opinions which the best of men have entertained of God and of his reign, have been such as detracted from the glory of his true character, and represented him as less wise, powerful or benevolent than what he really is. "God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that," even good people, "can ask or think." When Jacob thought that all the events of providence were against him—when David asked the Lord God to awake from sleep and be no longer forgetful of his people's afflictions and oppressions, they represented the Divine Being as exceedingly less benevolent than he really was. And how will the matter stand, if applied to those who esteem themselves exceedingly good, at the present day? Have they not fallen into still greater errors than did the ancient worthies? Are they not at work, with

all possible zeal, to create a revival above, as well as below? To this effect, uncommon prayers are offered and numerous meetings appointed; not only to arouse the old saints who have long been sleeping at their posts, but also to revive that mysterious Power by which all things exist. The Almighty himself is represented as having been, for a long time, forgetful of the affairs of his people in various places, and he is loudly invoked to awake, and sleep over those infinite concerns no longer! He is reminded in very familiar and moving terms of the tears and cries and exertions of his wakeful ministers, in behalf of poor sinners, who are liable every moment to be cut off from the earth, and plunged into eternity, to suffer forever the fire of God's wrath. And thus do they, in the heat of zeal, not only exhibit themselves as vastly more loving and faithful than our Maker, but they paint the image of God in fiery and bloody colors, to alarm the fears of the timid, and either drive them into distraction, or submission to the dictates of priests and elders. Hence, their errors are of the most fearful kind. They are such as rob God of his highest glory, both for time and eternity, and drive many serious inquirers, from confidence to despair. These, my friends, are sacred truths, and not high colored pictures of fancy. I hope they will be deeply impressed on all your hearts and minds, especially, of those who have a double interest in the solemnities of this occasion."

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Messrs. EDITORS.—Happening the other day to take up a copy of "Watts' Lyric Poems," I read as follows:

"Justice was pleased to bruise the God,
And pay its wrongs with heavenly blood;
What unknown pangs and racks he bore!
Then rose: the law could ask no more."

These queries were suggested to my mind:—Did God, the Almighty, uncreated Maker of heaven and earth ever die? Did our Saviour by his death satisfy the demands of Justice "with heavenly" and human blood? If "the law could ask no more" than the death of Christ, and if the "wrongs of justice were paid," why is it said and preached, that the violator of the law shall be punished in an "eternal hell"? Why is it preached, also, that the immutable justice of God demands and will inflict this condign punishment? Were the sorrows of our Savior in the anticipation of his ignominious death, and his pain when nailed to the Cross, more acute than any other man's could be? If so, was it in consequence of his being the son of God, or because he suffered for sin committed against God? Is there any thing in the Bible to support the opinion that "the divine nature" of the Savior suffered? If "God is a spirit," and if "no man hath seen him at any time," can we reasonably conclude that He ever endured the pains of death? If Jesus Christ was *Jehovah*, "the only wise God," who was He that "was not to leave his soul in hell nor suffer him to see corruption?" If the doctrine be true that Christ was God, and as such died, thereby "paying the wrongs of his justice," will his justice require the "eternal death" of any sinner? How is this doctrine to be reconciled with the scripture declarations, "that he was a man approved of God," a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," that "he was made lower than the angels," that "he was tempted as we are?" Now as all men have sinned, and justice ("which has been paid") demands everlasting punishment for their demerit, and as "unbelief is a damning sin," and "God has included all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all," will not all men be saved?

FRANK.

New-York, Nov. 28, 1831.

Never spend your money before you have it.

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

EDITED BY T. J. SAWYER AND P. PRICE.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1831.

OURSELVES.

We cannot forbear presenting our readers the following article in relation to ourselves. It is from the "Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald," the organ of the Methodist Episcopal Church, published in this city.

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

This is the title of a new periodical to be published weekly in the city of New-York. The editor, in his first number, hoists his flag boldly, and proclaims his objects and intentions without hesitation to be to plead the cause of universal salvation against all opposers. Like all others who wish to procure patronage by exciting an alarm, he talks much about "the important crisis" in our political history, as though our civil institutions were in danger of being torn by pieces—by whom? Why, to be sure, by those denominations of Christians who are exerting themselves to extend the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom by missionary and other charitable institutions; and then, forsooth, the Universalists are to save the nation from the apprehended catastrophe!

So far as the Christian Messenger shall succeed in accomplishing this patriotic object, we of course wish it success, although we have not one particle of faith in the existence of the causes of danger which it pretends to apprehend, nor in the means it shall adopt to avert them—that is, we do not believe that the American nation have any thing to fear from the spread of orthodox Christianity; nor even if they had, that Universalism is to be their savior.

But this perpetual cry of "The crisis!" "The looked for crisis!" "The awful crisis!" from demagogues, petty politicians, and timid religionists, is too stale and sickening to command any serious attention. Let the people be taught to fear God and honor their government, obey wholesome laws, and follow the precepts of Christianity from a principle of love to God and man, and the nation is safe. But is it at all likely that a religion which teaches an exemption from future punishment, let our crimes be whatever they may in this world, can be productive of those strong, hardy, and Christian virtues by which a nation is exalted? We might as soon expect that an abrogation of all civil laws, all penal codes, and an annihilation of all civil tribunals, and a demolition of all prisons, would reform thieves, knaves, and fools. If, however, the Universalist could succeed in establishing the principle on which his system is built, namely, that all things, actions and events, which come to pass in the entire universe, are the necessary results of an antecedent decree irresistibly operating to produce them, his conclusion in favor of universal salvation would stand. But before he can do this, he must entirely change the meaning of words, annihilate all motives to duty arising from commands, threatnings, and promises, and blot out from existence every theory which presupposes man's responsibility, erase the line which marks the difference between good and evil, and thus prove that "whatever is, is right." This Herculean task performed to the satisfaction of all parties, we will unite in shouting universal salvation to all, from one end of the habitable world to another.

But whether even this grand achievement would alter the state of things, would so exalt and refine human nature as to secure the nation from that moral deterioration which generally precedes destruction, would be a subject of grave discussion. As for ourselves, we think empires,

kingdoms, and republics would continue to rise and fall in the manner they have done heretofore; and that nothing short of that "building which is ETERNAL in the heavens," will be beyond the reach of mutation and decay.

We very much regret to see the editor in the ranks of "opposers" to the doctrine of Universal salvation. The Calvinist is consistent in his opposition; for he believes the salvation of all men was never designed or desired by God. The Arminian, on the other hand, regards the Deity in a different light, as willing and even anxious for the eventual holiness and happiness of our whole race. And is the editor opposed to such a result? What objections has he to Universal salvation? Let him beware, "lest haply he be found even to fight against God."

He thinks us anxious to excite an alarm, "as though our civil institutions were in danger." Well, so we are: but it is not for the contemptible purpose, as he with characteristic charity suggests, of obtaining patronage. Knaves, generally know who offer the largest reward, the popular sects, or such as are trodden under foot by them. We mean no insinuation, but he must be a fool who could embark in an unpopular cause, and raise an unpopular cry, with the expectation of obtaining patronage.

"But the cry of 'the awful crisis' from demagogues, petty politicians, and timid religionists, is too stale and sickening to command any serious attention." We wish he could, with more truth, have said that it is *groundless*. We confess ourselves too "timid religionists" not to apprehend danger from the increasing wealth and boldness of "orthodox christianity," and from a spirit, now only slumbering, that dictated repeated and unblushing attempts to establish a clerical influence over our civil government. Others may close their eyes and cry *peace, peace*. Others may lend their countenance and support to the "christian party in politics." Even the Methodists may, if they choose, become "hewers of wood and drawers of water," for their Presbyterian masters. We pray that our fears may prove unfounded, and that these leaders in our modern crusades may at length appear weak, rather than wicked christians. We say with him, "Let the people be taught to fear God (not the devil) and honor (not abuse) their government, obey (not disregard) wholesome laws, and follow the precepts of Christianity from a principle of love to God and man (not the fear of endless misery in hell) and the nation is safe." Before this can be done, however, some of those who "sit in Moses' seat" must be taught "which be the first principles of the oracles of God"—they must learn that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, and that Christianity is a religion of love and peace, not of fear and torment. He is of opinion, that a religion which teaches an exemption from future punishment, is not likely to produce those virtues by which a nation is exalted. Doubtless: but a religion which teaches that *all punishment can be avoided by repentance*, is the very spice of morality. Such doctrines no doubt exalt a nation, by rendering penal codes doubly necessary, and filling our prisons with wretches who have been taught that the ways of sin are ways of present pleasantness, and that endless

misery, which they might so easily escape, was all they had to fear.

One paragraph of the notice we much admire. The editor acknowledges that if the Calvinistic doctrine of decrees is true, our conclusion in favor of universal salvation will stand. We think so too, and we have little fear that he will disturb that principle on which, he says, our system is built. But this principle is by no means necessary to the doctrine of universal salvation. There is not a fraction's difference between the result of decrees and free agency. You may make the human mind as free as the mountain air, and unless you again deny this freedom, it will necessarily conduct to universal happiness. For as true as holiness affords peace, and sin produces misery, will man, if he is a free agent, eventually learn that obedience is better than transgression, and then, will he "do good and eschew evil." The error of our Methodist brethren is found, however, in the singular fact, that, although the greatest sticklers in the world for man's free agency, they yet believe it to be ephemeral as a flower. It exists only in this world, while throughout eternity, we shall be the merest machines, and praise or blaspheme the Deity, just as our characters may have been here, or just as he shall have fixed our fate in heaven or in hell. They reason, that if we are accountable beings, we must be free agents. If, then, we are forever accountable, as we certainly shall be, we must be free agents forever, and of course have the liberty of obeying God and being happy; and thus goes to the winds their cardinal doctrine, that *this life is our only state of probation*, and in its place rises the better covenant, founded on better promises, viz. of a world's eventual salvation.

We conclude this article, already much too 'protracted,' by wishing our Methodist brethren success in their endeavors to make men *real Christians*, and by hinting, with all becoming modesty, that a little more civility, a spice of christian charity, and better logic, would be likely to produce such a happy result, with even less noise and zeal. S.

NEW SYSTEM OF DIVINITY.

This appellation we shall be permitted to give to that extensive collection of *Tracts* published by the "American Tract Society." To say that we are amused with their perusal, would but half express our feelings, *we are delighted*. It is the boast of the Tract Society that it embraces, and enjoys the approbation of, all the *evangelical* denominations in our country.

We shall probably be asked wherein this collection of tracts presents a *new system* of Divinity. The principle which distinguishes it from almost all others, is found in *contrariety*, that is, *one doctrine is checked and balanced by an opposite*.—For instance, high-toned *Calvinism* is plainly and unequivocally taught in one tract, while the next, to counterbalance its predecessor's influence, inculcates in strongest terms, the most palpable *Arminianism*. Sometimes, and the case is not an unfrequent one, the same tract commences on one system and ends on another, so that *election* dies away in a few pages into *freewill*, and *irresistible grace* sinks down to *human ability*. Thus almost every mind detects something in one of these lit-

de heralds that meets its own peculiar views and Christian Charity induces individuals to countenance and encourage much which they deem rankest heresy, for "the glorious privilege" of disseminating a *little*, to which their hearts can in candor assent.

There is happily one point, however, upon which they all agree, and that is, that much the larger portion of the human race will be miserable in hell forever. Minor considerations are lost in this one of all absorbing interest; and it matters little how that blessed result is attained, whether by the deliberate cruelty or the unhappy weakness of Jehovah. That the dissemination of such a doctrine is worthy some sacrifices of individual opinion, will not be questioned by the humane.

The chief excellency of this new system is, that it sustains a striking *analogy* to the system of nature. We know that our little planet is kept in its proper path by antagonist, (the centrifugal and centripetal,) forces. So the human mind is to be preserved from error by being equally influenced by contradictory doctrines.

Another excellency of this system, however, is, that like the British Constitution, it is not the production of a single age, but has long been accumulating as genius prompted, circumstances required, or what is more important than either in the present case, as *finances* would allow. We should not forget to observe, that this system is not a formal code of religious doctrines and duties, in which propositions are clearly stated, logically proved, and fairly carried out to their legitimate results. The reader will find no such mis-spent labor here. Among dogmatical assertions he will discover pretty stories, illustrating every thing, we believe, but religious truth, and generally entitled to nearly as much credit as half of the popular novels. A few years more of success, and this series of tracts will equal in size, and not surpass in worth, the Talmud, which in many respects it resembles.

We shall hereafter, as opportunity occurs, present some of the glaring absurdities and palpable contradictions with which these tracts are filled, that our readers may judge with what kind of "knowledge and understanding" the religious community is fed. S.

"The editor, in his first number, hoists his flag boldly, and proclaims his objects and intentions without hesitation to be to plead the cause of Universal Salvation against all opposers."—*Christian Advocate and Journal*, Nov. 25th.

Well, Br. Bangs, do you object to *frankness*? For ourselves, we admire it, and we have too good an opinion of you, to believe that you will deliberately condemn it, although, through the first impulse of the moment, your language may be regarded somewhat equivocal. We repeat it, we admire *frankness*, whether in opposers or friends; for in the former case, we ever know where to meet them, and in the latter, where to rely.

In the present instance, therefore, we are inclined to adopt the most favorable construction, and shall receive the sentiment contained in the text you have furnished us above, as a flattering compliment to our ingenuousness. We have indeed "*raised our flag boldly*"—not in a spirit of bravado—not for the sole and pitiful purpose of creating *false alarms*, but in sober, honest feelings—through a strong conviction and sense of duty; and we shall not hesitate fearlessly "to plead the cause of Universal" Benevolence, "against all opposers,"—not in bitterness and wrath, but with the weapons of the Gospel of peace; and furthermore, we are not disposed to lower that "flag," unless firmly convinced of our error, in the spirit of meekness and christian charity, but rather let it float proudly over us, to the free untrammelled inspec-

tion of all. Its motto is, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men," and we rejoice in it, and few there are, actuated by the pure feelings of Christianity, by whatever name they may be called, who will not respond to it, in their cool, reflecting moments. We know that too often there are times with us all, in which *sectarian* influence may sway us from the path of christian charity, but under the transforming influence of the principles of our Divine Master, we are restored to a sense of duty: we retire within ourselves—to the closet of our own hearts, and say, in truth and sincerity, "Thy WILL, O God, be done in *earth* as it is in *Heaven*," and we never doubt, for a moment, that universal subjection and obedience reigns there. We say again, we have not adopted our course in insincerity, and neither have we made the foregoing declarations from a principle of "vain boasting," but through a consciousness of rectitude in our *intentions*, and a thorough conviction that we are engaged in the cause of Eternal Truth. You will, therefore, excuse our brief comment on your rather singular notice of our work.

One section of your article appears rather enigmatical: though possibly we do not rightly view it. You say that we "talk much about the 'important crisis'—of danger to our civil institutions," and you insinuate that it is our purpose "to save the nation from the apprehended catastrophe," by Universalism. You then continue, "so far as the Christian Messenger shall succeed in accomplishing this patriotic object, we of course wish it success!" and yet you immediately observe, "we have not *one particle* of faith in the existence of the cause of danger which it *pretends* to apprehend, nor in the means it shall adopt to avert them." That is, *so far as the Christian Messenger shall succeed in accomplishing a PRETENDED patriotic object, WHOLLY GROUNDLESS, by means not entitled to the LEAST PARTICLE OF CONFIDENCE, you of course wish it success!* Have we stated it correctly? If so, we really cannot understand it.

"Like all others who wish to procure patronage by exciting alarms," &c. Gently, Br. B. We should think your recollections of the early history of your own denomination in this country, must be too vivid, to withhold that charity and candor which is the ornament of the christian character. However erroneous may be our views, we may possibly be as sincere, as was yourself, when your "flag was first raised." Such an insinuation comes with an ill-grace from the conductor of a publication possessing the largest circulation in the world.

"If, however, the Universalist could succeed in establishing the principle on which his system is built," &c. "his conclusion in favor of Universal Salvation would stand." When Br. B. will show us that the "counsel of the Lord" will not "stand," and that he will not "do all his pleasure," we may be induced to lower that "flag," so obnoxious to many. For our own part, however, we had much rather place our eternal destinies under the kind care and protection of our Father in heaven, than to retain them in our own frail keeping; and endeavor to go on confidently and joyously in the discharge of our duty to Him, as a kind, unerring parent, who will provide for us infinitely better than we are able to ask or think. We really can see no necessity for our "annihilating all motives to duty," for the scriptures assure us, that Love begets Love—"we love him, *because* he first loved us."

On the whole, we are rather pleased with Br. B.'s notice, than otherwise. In it we think we discover some candor, and some share of sound doctrine. True, there is a little misapprehension of our ground; and a spice of playful sarcasm which we deem rather unjust and inappropriate,

yet we are not disposed to lay it seriously at heart, but feel inclined to extend to him the hand of frankness and good will. We may have occasion to differ with him frequently, on many points, but we will endeavor to do it in the spirit of benevolence. In our public career, it is not at all improbable we shall occasionally meet on the "narrow walk" of life, and if he is not able to induce us to turn about and go with him, we hope we shall ever be disposed to give him "half the passage," with the friendly compliments pertaining to such a meeting. P.

TRACT SOCIETY IN DISTRESS.

From a communication in the last N. Y. Observer, we learn, that the American Tract Society is in a very melancholy condition. We have not time to give in detail a statement of its financial concerns. From May 1, to Nov. 1, it has paid \$27,310.04; its total receipts, during the same time, were only \$19,626.25. "It is worthy of remark," says the writer, and so we think, for it bespeaks an increase of good sense, "that the *whole amount of donations, made by all the Society's Branches and Auxiliaries*, from May 1, to November 1, is but \$315 65." For the last six months the Society has fallen in debt \$7,626 79; for six months to come it has to pay \$17,798 01, besides current expenses, and of course if it should be as successful as it has been for the preceding six months, it will be in debt but \$25,424 80. And this sum, constantly increasing, must, to a considerable extent, be drawn from the pockets of our poor and laboring classes of community. We take the liberty of suggesting a means by which the society may lessen its expenses, and that is, to scatter their wretched tracts only where they are wanted. There are several thousand families, we think, even in this city, and hundreds of thousands in the field of their labors, in which these little messengers of wrath, are received with any thing but a welcome, and are regarded as an insult, offered to their intelligence and christian feelings. We are glad to hear that "the contributions for the last eighteen months have been far less than in preceding years," and hope the Tract Society will eventually learn that their labors are *justly* appreciated by a religious but discriminating community. S.

TRADITION.

"Among the numerous traditions of the New-Zealanders," says Nicholas, "there is one which is very remarkable. It refers to the creation of man, and has been handed down from father to son, through all generations. They believe the first man to have been created by three gods—*Moucheerangaranga* or *Toopoonah*, or grandfather, *Mowheermooa* and *Mowheebotakee*; but give the greatest share in the business to the first mentioned of these deities."

May we not suppose that the New-Zealanders received this traditional belief respecting the creation of man from the scriptural account of that sublime act of Omnipotence recorded in the book of Genesis? The resemblance is too striking to escape observation. God said, "Let us make man, in our image, after our likeness." In this short sentence the whole Trinity of Divine Persons in the eternal Godhead, neither of which is derived from or begotten by the other, is recognized as co-operating or conjointly working for the production of man, the last but noblest part of the creation.—*Adv. and Jour.*

Such are the ridiculous fooleries by which the palpable absurdity of the Trinity is attempted to be sustained. A tradition, forsooth, among savages, because it happens to recognize *three* gods, must no doubt be drawn from the Bible, which is not only silent on the subject of a trinity, but also teaches in language that cannot well be misunderstood, that there is *one* and but *one true God*.

We should think, that Dr. Bangs must see that his tradition, if it proves any thing, proves too much: for it proves, not that there is "a trinity of Divine Persons in the eternal Godhead," but that there are *three* separate and distinct Gods. A pretty mess of polytheism, for a Christian, indeed! Which of your three Gods, Dr., corresponds with the New-Zealanders' "grandfather?" Paul has taught us that "an idol is no hing in the world, and that there is none other God but one: For though there be, that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many,) nevertheless, to us there is but *one* God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and *one* Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

But Dr. Bangs also finds a striking resemblance in this heathen tradition and the declaration of God, "Let us make man in *our* image after *our* likeness." The Hindoos, Dr. have *five* gods instead of *three*—the Greeks and Romans many more. The Hindoo traditions are as good as those of New-Zealand, and we find just as much resemblance in one case as the other. If the declaration of God, "Let us make man," &c. can prove that there are *three* gods, it is equally good in proving that there are *five* or *thirty thousand*.

But we have a word or two more to say to Dr. Bangs. He knows, or he ought to know that this passage from Genesis proves neither the *trinity*, nor a *plurality* of Gods, nor even of *persons* in the Godhead. Professor Stuart, who certainly understands the original language, as well as any man in America, and who can be accused of no partiality to Unitarianism, says on this passage, "Most of the older critics find an intimation in this plural, (as they believe,) of a plurality of persons in the Godhead." But the evidence seems too doubtful, in this case, to be relied upon. The *pluralis majesticus* or *pluralis excellentia*, as it is called, in respect to *Aloheem*, *Adonai*, *Kedoshheem* &c. seems now to be generally conceded. That pronouns may be used, and are used, in a similar way among the oriental nations, seems to be somewhat certain from the following examples, viz: Ezra IV, 18; Dan. II, 36; 1 Macc. X, 19, 20," &c. "Compare also, Gen. III, 22, XVII, 7; Isa. VI, 8." After alluding to modern usage of royalty, he adds, "Modern usage can not help us to determine the *usus loquendi* of the Hebrews. So far as this is now discoverable, by the evidence before us, respecting the use of the plural number in the Old Testament, *I feel constrained to agree* with those critics, who resolve it on the whole into the *pluralis excellentia*." Heb. Chrest. 110, and 111.

"*Pluralis excellentia*," we should observe, is a grammatical term, literally translated, the *plural of excellence*, and is easily explained by a reference to the use of plural pronouns by Kings. They say, "*our* pleasure," "*our* will," "*we* do" so and so, and the like, when *one* only speaks.—This grammarians call the plural of excellence. Prof. Stuart, although with evident reluctance, allows that God, as a single individual, said, by way of eminence, "Let *us* (me) make man, in *our* (my) image," and thus gives up this far famed passage as proving or even intimating the doctrine of the Trinity.

S.

Our friends in Hightstown, N. J. we regret to learn, were last Sunday disappointed. Br. Smith left N. York to fulfil his appointment and took along with him our papers for that place. Owing to the prevalent influenza with which he was afflicted, and the inclemency of the weather, he was unable to proceed farther than New-Brunswick. Our subscribers were of course disappointed by not receiving our last number on the usual day. We hope a statement of these circumstances will be a satisfactory apology.

S.

We invite the attention of our readers to an article on our third page, from the "STAMFORD SENTINEL," headed "FANATICISM." For a length of time past, that paper has taken a firm, though dispassionate stand against the extravagant measures, (as we are compelled to regard them,) which have been adopted by the popular denominations of our day. From a personal acquaintance with the editor, we are satisfied his course has not been adopted through feelings of opposition to primitive Christianity, and we feel confident he would not admit articles like the above into his columns on slight and uncertain grounds. If the representations, therefore, are true, and we doubt them not, we appeal to every honest and reflecting person whether *these things ought so to be*, and whether it is not the solemn duty of the Press, and of every Philanthropist, to raise the voice firmly and decidedly against such unchristian measures. We are not over-disposed to fault-finding with our fellow creatures, but where evil is manifest to ourselves, we must, if honest, object to it. We are told, it is true, we misjudge—that they are actuated by the most pure, benevolent, and disinterested feelings; that they have not the wish to abridge one single privilege of their fellows, &c. yet the question will intrude, what other inference shall we, or can we draw from conduct like that referred to? Foster and promote such a spirit, and what influence, think you, it would exert on Society? Give the leaders of it *power*, and what would be the fate of him who could not conscientiously bend to its dictation? We humbly ask Br. Bangs, whether we have nothing to apprehend from such a spirit as this? P.

NEW SOCIETIES.

A new Universalist Society has recently been formed in London, Middlesex County, Upper Canada, of which Br. A. Ladd is Clerk.

We are happy to learn, says the last Gospel Anchor, "that our friends in Hubbardton, Vt. have formed themselves into a Society, and are desirous of obtaining a Preacher. Our friends will recollect it as the same place where the Junior Editor had the privilege of hearing a grave debate on the question, 'whether Christians were justifiable in attending a Funeral where a Universalist Minister officiated?' and where it was decided in the negative." The same paper adds, that measures are in train for the formation of Societies both in the north and south village of Adams, Mass.

UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

A Society of the above denomination has been formed in Troy, N. Y. The senior Editor of the Anchor says, "We have the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with Mr. Brown, the Pastor, of the University of Cambridge, and we sincerely hope he will succeed to the extent of his wishes in his laudable endeavors to build up a Society in this city."

A religious maniac, says the Keene Sentinel, a most miserable object, belonging to Andover, Vt. was taken through this town last week. We learn that she has a brother in the same situation, now in the hospital.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

ENDLESS MISERY.

This sentiment has so often assailed the ears of those who profess it, that it exerts but little or no influence over their feelings. And if it *must* be proclaimed, it is a fortunate circumstance that it is so; for were it otherwise, insanity and death would be its sure effects whenever believed. Could we view this awful dogma in all its shocking bearings, we should at once reject it as error, or sink beneath its horrid influence.

Endless suffering! The imagination, when put upon its greatest stretch, cannot grasp this wild idea. There is nothing in nature with which it can be compared. Man enters existence frail and imperfect, breathes in a terrestrial clime for a moment, suffers the pains and troubles to which poor mortality is heir, and then expires; but ah! whither has his spirit fled? To God who gave it, or to fiends below? We will suppose the latter. Millions on millions of centu-

ries, in slow succession roll away, and this multiplied by every spear of grass that ever grew, by every leaf that ever fell from the trees of the forest, by every atom of matter in our globe, by every particle of water in all the oceans, by every ray of light that ever did, and ever will radiate from the sun and all the stars, and again multiplied by itself millions of times more. Myriads of periods of immense duration circle onward until eternity grows dim with age—and then suppose this almost infinite number to be the first term of a series in geometrical progression; and for the ratio, imagine a row of figures, so minute that it would require a powerful microscope to discover them even close to the eye, that would reach from earth to one of those fixed stars whose light, which travels two hundred thousand miles a second, has not yet reached us since its creation. And for the number of terms, suppose a row of minute figures, that would reach to a distance to which, light could not attain, while on a constant flight for as many millions of centuries as there are inches in the orbit of Herschel; and after all this process is carried through, the poor creature has but just entered the threshold of his suffering, and this, too, for the errands of some sixty or seventy years. Mighty heavens! Can even insanity extend to this? Can a sentiment so big with absurdity, and so opposed to every thing that deserves the name of truth, find a resting place even in the darkest corner of the head of bewildered man? We know of no idea so far removed from truth as that of eternal torment. It should be placed in the farthest corner of the universe; for every thing else must be admitted true, before this wild solecism can be entitled even to a possibility of being true.

Reader, when I can believe that that God, who is represented in his holy word as *kind* to the unthankful and the evil, *good* unto *all* and his tender mercies over all his works, would call from nonentity into existence unnumbered myriads of sentient beings, who had no choice whether to exist, or not, either with the fixed purpose of torturing them eternally, or what amounts to the same thing, with a certain unerring knowledge that they would be endless losers by their existence; I say when I can believe this, in connexion with the self-evident idea that sin is finite, it being the immediate production of fragile man, that is, the effect of a finite cause, I shall be prepared to believe any thing, as soon as stated to my mind. There will be nothing left but what my faith can grasp. But before I can exercise unlimited credulity, I must be brought to believe the doctrine of endless misery. S. J. H.

LETTERS AND REMITTANCES.

Received at this office, ending November 30th.

J. E., Augusta, Ga.; H. F., Newtown, Conn.; P. M., Mattituck, L. I.; S. B. C., Kingston, N. J., \$2; W. M. and W. P., New-Brunswick, N. J., each \$2; H. B. and E. F. Somers, N. Y. \$1; J. M. B., J. B., W. A. G., J. A. O., S. Z. P., Augusta, N. J., each \$2; S. P. J. B. R. S. Branchville, N. J., each \$2; J. L. Sparta, N. J. \$2; T. P. W., Newark, N. J., \$1; H. C., Staten Island, \$2; E. B., Hartford, N. Y., \$2; R. F. T. Hempstead, L. I. \$2.

RELIGIOUS NOTICES.

Br. ROBERT SMITH, will preach at the Town House, in Norwalk, Conn. on Sunday, the 4th of Dec. forenoon and afternoon; at Saugatuck in the evening; and at Bridgeport, on Sunday, December 11.

Br. HILLYER will preach at Rye, N. Y. on Sunday, the 4th of December; at Middleville, N. J. on Sunday, Dec. 11, forenoon and afternoon; and at the Academy in Camptown in the evening.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.
TRUST IN GOD.

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."
Job xiii, 15.

Should pain and sickness o'er me throw
Their pallid forms of wasting wo;—
Should friends forsake me, and depart
With none to cheer this drooping heart;
I'd bow unto thy sovereign will,
And though thou slay me, trust thee still.
Should scorn and hatred point the dart,
Should falsehood reach the vital part,
Composed, my ruined hopes I'd view,
And trust in thee to bear me through;—
Suppliant I'd bow before thy will,
And though thou slay me, trust thee still.
Should want, with all her meager train,
Scatter my dreary path with pain—
My Savior bent to know the strife,
And rose above the ills of life—
To that great pattern, bows my will,
And though thou slay me, trusts thee still.
Yes! Father, thou art good and just,
Thy word (though others fail) I'll trust;
My chaste heart, with glad acclaim,
Bounds joyful at my Father's name;
Active to do his gracious will,
And though he slay me, trusts him still.

S. A. M.

MEMORY.

There is a sea, by whose dim shore,
We fondly pause awhile to gaze
On wrecks of pleasure now no more,
The traces sad of by-gone days;
That sea is Memory's—its waves
Roll dark and chill above the spot,
Where resting in their silent graves,
Lie those who were, but now are not.
There is a star whose brightness gleams,
Above the cold and silent tomb,
The radiance of whose lovely beams
May pierce the dim and shadowy gloom;
That star is Memory's—oft its light
Has lit the dark and lonely way,
And sorrow's path hath grown more bright,
Beneath its sweet and hallowed ray.
There is a strain whose music flings
The sound of sadness on the ear,
And songs of mournful sweetness bring
Like angel's notes, so soft, so clear;
And sad ones even come to pay
Their mournful homage at thy shrine.
That strain is thine too, Memory;
Oh! all that's sad and sweet is thine.

LINES BY THE LAKE SIDE.

This placid lake, my gentle girl,
Be emblem of thy life—
As full of peace and purity,
As free from care and strife;
No ripple on its tranquil breast
That dies not with the day;
No pebble in its darkest depths
But quivers in its rays.
And see, how every glorious form
And pageant of the skies,
Reflected from its glassy face,
A mirrored image lies;
So, be thy spirit ever pure:
To God, to virtue given:
And thought, and word, and action bear
The imagery of heaven!

G. W. DOANE.

THE PLEASURES OF A CULTIVATED
IMAGINATION.—DUGALD STEWART.

The attention of young persons may be seduced, by well-selected works of fiction, from the present objects of the senses, and the thoughts accustomed to dwell on the past, the distant or the future; and in the same proportion in which this effect is, in any instance, accomplished, "the man," as Dr. Johnson has justly remarked, "is exalted in the scale of intellectual beings." The tale of fiction will probably be soon laid aside with the toys and rattles of infancy; but the habits which it has contributed to fix, and the

powers which it has brought into a state of activity, will remain with the possessor, permanent and inestimable treasures, to his latest hour.

Nor is it to the young alone that these observations are to be exclusively applied. Instances have frequently occurred of individuals, in whom the power of imagination has, at a more advanced period of life, been found susceptible of culture to a wonderful degree. In such men, what an accession is gained to their most refined pleasures! What enchantments are added to their most ordinary perceptions! The mind awakening, as if from a trance, to a new existence, becomes habituated to the most interesting aspects of life and of nature; the intellectual eye "is purged of its film;" and things the most familiar and unnoticed, disclose charms invisible before.

The same objects and events which were lately beheld with indifference, occupy now all the powers and capacities of the soul; the contrast between the present and the past serving only to enhance and to endear so unlooked for an acquisition. What Gray has so finely said of the pleasures of *vicissitude*, conveys but a faint image of what is experienced by the man, who, after having lost in vulgar occupations and vulgar amusements, his earliest and most precious years, is thus introduced at last to a new heaven and a new earth:

"The meaneft floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise."

The effects of foreign travel have been often remarked, not only in rousing the curiosity of the traveller while abroad but in correcting, after his return, whatever habits of inattention he had contracted to the institutions and manners among which he was bred. It is in a way somewhat analogous, that our occasional excursions into the regions of imagination, increases our interest in those familiar realities from which the stores of imagination are borrowed. We learn insensibly to view nature with the eye of the painter and the poet, and to seize those "happy attitudes of things" which their taste at first selected; while, enriched with the accumulations of ages, and with "the spoils of time," we unconsciously combine with what we see, all that we know and all that we feel; and sublime the organical beauties of the material world, by blending with them the inexhaustible delights of the heart and of the fancy.

THE TWO SEXES.

The following true and elegant paragraph, is from the pen of Mrs. Sigourney, whose mind is the dwelling of light and beauty. "Man might be initiated into the varieties and mysteries of needle work; taught to have patience with the feebleness and waywardness of infancy, and to steal with noiseless steps around the chamber of the sick; and woman might be instructed to contend for the palm of science, to pour forth eloquence in senates, or to "wade through fields of slaughter to a throne." Yet revolvings of the soul would attend this violence, to nature, this abuse of physical and intellectual energy; while the beauty of social order would be defaced, and the fountain of earth's felicity broken up.—We arrive, then, at the conclusion. The sexes are intended for different spheres, and constructed in conformity to their respective destinations, by Him who bids the oak brave the fury of the tempest, and the Alpine flower lean its cheek on the bosom of eternal snows. But disparity does not necessarily imply inferiority. The high places of the earth with all their pomp and glory are indeed accessible only to the march of ambition or the grasp of power; yet those who pass with faithful and unapplauded zeal through their humble round of duty, are not unnoticed by the

"Great Taskmaster's eye" and their endowments, though unaccounted poverty among men, may prove durable riches in the Kingdom of Heaven.

PLEASURE.

Society is not, and ought not to be, exclusively devoted to *serious* concerns. The beneficent Creator of the Universe would not have adapted human beings to the enjoyment of his gifts, unless he intended that they should be enjoyed. With the law which enjoins industry, comes the law of fruition.—Why should the eye be formed to perceive natural and artificial beauty, if it is not to be used for that purpose? Why has the capacity to make instruments capable of emitting sweet sounds been given, if such sounds are not to be heard? Why should the human structure be capable of the sweetest melody, and of graceful action, and of the delightful expression, beaming from innocent and heavenly countenances, if pleasure from such sources were forbidden us? Why does the grape ripen, the silk worm toil, the annual fleece return, the diamond sparkle, the marble yield to the chisel, and the canvass catch and preserve the inspiration of genius, but to awaken human desire, animate industry, and reward with fruition? It is the *excess*, and the *abuse* that are forbidden.

SADNESS.

There is a mysterious feeling that frequently passes like a cloud over the spirit. It comes upon the soul in the social circle, in the calm and silent retreat of solitude. Its power is alike supreme over the weak and the iron-hearted. At one time it is caused by the flitting of a single thought across the mind. Again, a second will come, booming across the ocean of memory, gloomy and solemn as the death knell, overshadowing all the bright hopes, and sunny feelings of the heart. Who can describe it, and yet who has not felt its bewildering influence? Still it is a delicious sort of sorrow: and like a cloud dimming the sunshine of the river, although causing a momentary shade of gloom, it enhances the beauty of returning brightness.

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